DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 207 958 SP 018 769

AUTHOR Boston, Bedford D., Ed.; Kingsford, Steve, Ed.
TITLE Field Agentry in Teacher Centers. (The concept of the agricultural extension agent applied to teacher centering in the United States).
INSTITUTION Southeast Idaho Teacher Center Consortium, Twin Falls.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Jun 81
NOTE 29p.; Paper presented at the National Teacher Centers Conference (Washington, DC, June 24-27, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Change Agents; Change Strategies; Consortia; *Diffusion; Field Studies; *Information Dissemination; Information Needs; Inservice Teacher Education; Linking Agents; Mobile Educational Services; *Problem Solving; *Regional Programs; Rural Schools; School Districts; *Teacher Centers

ABSTRACT

The directors of 12 teacher centers describe their experiences as field agents, in multifaceted roles such as catalysts, solution-givers, facilitators, resource linkers, coordinators, or trainers. Ways that the teacher centers have offered help to schools and to teachers are outlined. The directors believe that change is made first on an individual level, and last on an institutional basis. Included are reports from: (1) Bethel-Eugene-Springfield Teacher Center (Eugene, Oregon); (2) Franklin County Teacher Center (Columbus, Ohio); (3) Northwest Mississippi Teacher Center (Senatobia); (4) Pittsburgh Area Center for Teachers (Pennsylvania); (5) Project RISE (Regional In-Service Education), (Clochester, Connecticut); (6) School Resource Network (Ventura, California); (7) Southeast Idaho Teacher Center Consortium (Twin Falls); (8) Southern New Jersey Regional Teacher Center (Glassboro); (9) Southern Piedmont Educational Consortium Teacher Center (Albemarle, North Carolina); (10) TRIAD Teacher Center (West Lafayette, Indiana); (11) Washington West Resource Center (Waitsfield, Vermont); and (12) Wood County Area Teacher Center (Bowling Green, Ohio). (FG)

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FIELD AGENTRY

IN

TEACHER CENTERS

(The concept of the agricultural extension agent applied to teacher centering in the United States)

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Presented to

The National Teacher Centers Conference

June 24 - 27, 1981

Washington, D.C.

SP 018 769

This paper was supported in whole or in part by the U.S. Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Office of Education, and no official endorsement by the U.S. Office of Education should be inferred.

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* Adapted from Profile of a rural teachers' center, Occasional Paper No. 2, Teacher Centers' Exchange, San Francisco (1980).

FOREWORD

The idea of the field agent, a person who works with an organization in an attempt to facilitate change - but who is not part of that organization - has been around a long time. Every successful traveling sales person is a field agent. In the Teacher Center business they have various names such as field agent, advisor, liaison, and site coordinator, but they all follow basically the same philosophy of service to their clientele. They believe that change is made first by individuals, then by groups, and then by institutions and that the failure to recognize this personal aspect of change is probably the major reason why so many change efforts have failed in our public schools (Hall, 1978). They believe that the more field agents can communicate and work with their clientele on a face-to-face basis, the more they can build a sense of empathy and mutual trust -- factors which greatly enhance the probability of the successful implementation and institutionalization of any change. Recent Rand Corporation studies of change in education bear this out (Berman and McLaughlin).

The job of the field agent in teacher centers is multi-faceted and played out a little differently in each center. It includes the four roles perceived by Havelock (1969): (1) the catalyst who creates awareness of the need for change and the spark of desire for that change within his clientele; (2) the solution giver who has experience and knowledge to share; (3) the process helper who can facilitate the change process by providing technical assistance and support; and (4) the resource linker who brings resources to match needs. Judy Smith (1981) suggests two additional roles: the coordinator and the trainer. The Coordinator, states Smith, is one who "...strives in various ways to bring together persons or agencies where improvements in education might result from increased communication, or where the effectiveness of activities that are being performed relatively independently could be increased if they were done in concert." This role may also involve the field agent in negotiations and politics, states Smith, "...(especially professional power.)" This latter aspect of the coordinator role is one especially true for teacher center personnel who have, from the beginning, had to deal gingerly with their clientele -- a clientele which too often has consisted of two to three adversary groups. In the trainer role, the field agents act as "super teachers." First of all, they are outstanding teachers of kids and, secondly, they also have the ability to share this expertise with fellow teachers in non-threatening and productive ways. Teacher center field agents carry out most of the above roles to some degree. Certain centers emphasize one or more roles over others, but all are involved in providing educators the challenge and the continuous support that are necessary for adult development (Boston, 1981).

This monograph has been developed by eleven teacher center directors across the United States who practice some form of field agentry and who wish to share their experience. We hope our work will provide both support and challenge to the reader.

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Bedford D. Boston
Steve Kingsford
Field Agentry Project Directors

Bethel-Eugene-Springfield Teacher Center
200 Silver Lane
Eugene, Oregon 97404

INTRODUCTION

The Bethel-Eugene-Springfield Teacher Center (BEST Center) serves approximately 2,000 teachers in 91 schools and another 1,000 people consisting of substitute teachers, teacher aides and administrators. We serve an urban area with schools located within a radius of 30 miles.

The BEST Center operates under the philosophy that, in order for training to be effective, the person receiving the training must take an active role in determining how that service will be received. This philosophy led to the development of our "Responsive Inservice Model."

THE FIELD AGENT ROLE

Although we do not have personnel that travel to the schools on a regular basis, our model fits the field agent role in some aspects: 1) we travel to the teacher's location whenever possible and 2) our service is on a one-to-one basis and very personal.

Our first contact with the teacher is made when they call the Center seeking assistance. Either the Director or the Inservice Assistant has an informal discussion with the teacher to determine the need. After the need has been identified, we search out the appropriate person to deliver the service and bring the trainer and trainee together. Both the delivery system and the length of time is negotiated by BEST Center and the trainee.

We sometimes find that a need expressed by one teacher is shared by others. When this happens we offer a large group workshop and follow-up training, if appropriate.

WHAT IS WORKING

Teachers are increasingly aware of our Center's services and have been enthusiastic about being able to make a phone call and receive help. The number of teachers using this service has been steadily increasing since our Center began in 1978. Teachers have told us that this is the first time they have been able to receive timely, personal attention to their needs.

Our "Third Party Evaluation Report" stated that "Request for inservice receive speedy response from Center staff. . . Half the requests were responded to in three days or less." and "Generally BEST Center responses fit very precisely the user's specific need."

WHAT NEEDS WORK

Although participation in our Center has steadily increased, we still are not satisfied with the number of teachers taking advantage of our

"Responsive Inservice" model. Teachers find it hard to believe that they can be an active participant in designing their own inservice training, and the majority still wait for the right group workshop to come along. We began a new experience during 1979-80 which responds to this concern. Twenty teachers who were frequent users of BEST Center contacted approximately 100 non-users to discuss the services available through our Center and how teachers could take advantage of these services. We've received calls from several of the people contacted and the response to this personal contact has been encouraging.

Franklin County Teacher Center
280 East Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

INTRODUCTION:

The Franklin County Teacher Center serves over 5,000 educators in 168 different school buildings and in 17 school districts. To assure ongoing communication between the center and its clients, a linkage agent, or liaison is selected to represent each district. Selected jointly by the district's association president and superintendent, this person serves the center for a one year term, with his/her contract renewable each year upon agreement of the center director and the district association president and superintendent. Each liaison is paid a stipend for his/her efforts and release time is provided when needed.

THE ROLE:

Since the effectiveness and ultimate success of the center's efforts is dependent upon the liaison component, selection is of utmost importance. Qualifications sought are: commitment to inservice education and staff development; demonstrated human relations/communications skills; commitment to improving his/her own skills; commitment to goals and responsibilities of the center project; interest in the improvement of teaching and learning; and evidence of leadership ability.

Major responsibilities of the liaison include: regular communication with the center director about district inservice activities; visitations to schools and staffs across the school district to promote the center concept; identifying resources in the district; gathering data from teachers and administrators about special projects, inservice interests, teacher strengths; and participating in programs for the development of effective liaisons.

As each new liaison comes aboard, he/she attends an all day orientation session at the center. Areas emphasized during this session include: the role and function of the center; the role and function of the liaison; team and network building; working with the school organization; communications, both interdistrict and intradistrict; and program development. All liaisons attend monthly meetings to plan, discuss and implement center activities. In addition, a two-day retreat is held in the summer at which time liaisons attend professional growth sessions. Time is also spent reflecting and making recommendations for the future.

WHAT IS WORKING:

To date we have 17 school district liaisons, each of whom is enthusiastically committed to enhancing inservice education and staff development through opportunities provided by the center. They have experienced much success in informing educators about the center, its purpose and its activities. They have been extremely attentive in

listening to their people and reporting back to the center specific district needs, and in identifying their district's resources, both human and material. And, they have willingly given of their time to help plan and host workshops and to serve on various center committees.

WHAT NEEDS WORK:

At monthly meetings, we encourage the liaisons to exchange ideas and voice concerns, whether personal or district, and we also make on-site visits to each liaison as often as possible. We feel, however, the need for some other means of support, i.e., developing a buddy/partner system.

Also, it must be realized that the liaisons' responsibilities to the center are in addition to their regular full-time jobs. Also, the district size varies from 60 educators to 1,200 educators and from a single building to 30 buildings. No doubt the liaisons feel over-worked, underpaid and unrecognized for the time and effort they put into their job. Perhaps a better rewarding system or distribution of work responsibilities or more liaisons would be in line.

Northwest Mississippi Teacher Center
136 N. Front Street
Senatobia, MS 38668

INTRODUCTION

The Northwest Mississippi Teacher Center Consortium serves 1500 teachers in five school systems and one private parochial school. The consortium area covers approximately 1500 square miles within the three counties it serves. The Center is not a drop-in facility, although it is equipped with a small library and equipment for teacher use. Primary use of the Center's services is through on-site involvement.

The staff of the Northwest Mississippi Teacher Center consists of a director, a training coordinator, who in essence is the field agent, and an office manager. The field agent was employed based on qualifications of educational background, experience in the classroom, and interpersonal skills.

THE FIELD AGENT ROLE

The primary responsibilities of the Field Agent are: (1) To establish liaison with individual schools; (2) To provide services to clientele; and (3) To promote the Teacher Center and its programs.

Liaison between schools and the Teacher Center is enhanced by individual building representatives. These reps maintain contact with the Field Agent through on-site visits, telephone contacts, and written communications. In addition to information concerning Teacher Center programs, the needs of individual teachers and entire faculties are communicated by the building rep, with the Field Agent then acting upon specified needs.

The services provided to clientele by the Field Agent include information researched on request, workshops designed for the specific needs of the participants, individual studies developed for teacher skill enhancement, and in-class assistance in curriculum development. The Field Agent conducts workshops and/or in-service sessions, when qualified to do so.

In all aspects of services, the Field Agent promotes the Teacher Center and its programs. This is accomplished through written publications such as the newsletter, brochures, booklets, flyers, and letters and through participation at local teachers' meetings, state conferences, and the sessions of principals, special groups (gifted, vo-tech, etc.), and parent organizations which take place in the area. It is felt that fostering good "public relations" enchances the success of the Northwest Mississippi Teacher Center. Parents, administrators, the community at-large, as well as teachers, are afforded the opportunity to see what the Teacher Center does to improve education in the area.

WHAT IS WORKING

Communication with teachers increases in its effectiveness with each passing month. The individual building reps have, on the whole, promoted the Teacher Center and have encouraged participation in its activities. As the frequency of individual contact increases, the response of building reps to the Field Agent, has increased.

Thus far, no request for a particular service has been unfulfilled with the exception of one particular workshop of a specialized nature, and that is still being pursued. Taking services on-site to the clientele has worked very well. Getting those teachers who are in close proximity to the Teacher Center facility to make use of its equipment and library has been more difficult, but is improving.

WHAT NEEDS WORK

There are three major areas in which improvement is being sought: (1) The acquisition of a firm commitment from elected building representatives has, at times been difficult to get. Teachers have sometimes complained that reps are not providing them with communications and information as they should. Getting building reps to meet for training/discussion/and/or feedback has been very difficult. (2) Getting commitments from superintendents for in-service days for teacher-requested workshops has also been difficult. Our teachers have been unwilling to attend workshops after school or at night, except for one hour immediately following school. (3) Another problem has been in finding adequate time for the Field Agent to be on-site interacting with teachers while also attending to reports, newsletters, and other logistical items that require in-office time.

The Northwest Mississippi Teacher Center is working diligently to overcome the shortcomings and optimize the successes of our initial year of operation. It is our hope that through the concentrated efforts of all staff members, the Policy Board, administrators, and teachers, even greater success is awaiting us in coming years.

Pittsburgh Area Center for Teachers
Porter Hall 223
Carnegie-Mellon University
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213

INTRODUCTION

The Pittsburgh Area Center for Teachers is a loose consortium of thirty-one western Pennsylvania school districts. An office and resource library are located at Carnegie-Mellon University, a site roughly in the geographical center of our 730 square mile service area. While our site houses a curriculum library, workroom, and meeting rooms, most center services are offered as a "road show" to approximately 5000 middle and secondary school teachers in over 110 school buildings.

PACT field agents are called Teacher Associates. Typically, Teacher Associates are secondary school teachers on sabbatical leave from school districts in our service area. Each Teacher Associate serves on the PACT staff for one to three semesters. At any given time, six to nine Teacher Associates serve on the PACT staff. A permanent Program Coordinator helps manage the day-to-day activities of Teacher Associates. When Teacher Associates return to their home district they act as informal extension agents for the Center.

THE FIELD AGENT ROLE

Teacher Associates comprise the primary link between classroom teachers and the Center. Recognizing the importance of personal communication, Teacher Associates visit local schools to (1) explain the purpose and operating principles of the Center, (2) conduct needs assessment discussions with teachers, and (3) conduct field site programs and respond to requests for classroom advisers. Teacher Associates have also organized the Network for Effective Teaching (NET), a resource file which links teachers with other teachers to meet common concerns or share special skills and talents.

In addition to field services to area schools, Teacher Associates also organize and occasionally conduct special after school, evening and Saturday programs at our Center site. Colleague support groups among teachers of various subjects, alternative career workshops, and time and stress management programs are typical of the workshops offered at the Center. These programs bring together teachers from schools throughout the county.

WHAT IS WORKING

The Teacher Associate program was designed to meet two primary objectives. First, using teachers on leave to staff the Center affords an opportunity to return inservice leaders to the schools. Second, the Teacher Associate program was designed to provide what we believed would be a staff large enough to serve area teachers on an individual basis. The first objective has been met; the second less so.

Through their experiences with the Center, Teacher Associates have strengthened their skills as classroom teachers and have acquired new leadership and communication skills to serve their colleagues.

WHAT NEEDS WORK

Our service area includes over 110 school buildings, far too many for a staff of six to eight field agents to establish credibility and visability among our teacher clients. We have found that the responsibilities of the Teacher Associate are too broad; they are stretched thin by the demand for both field visits and Center workshop programs. Over the next years, we hope to concentrate our field service efforts on a selected number of buildings. This will enable the Teacher Associate to be more visable in the schools and will encourage more teachers to develop individual and long term relationships with the Center staff. We also hope to use more local teachers as workshop leaders for Center-based programs, limiting the role of the Teacher Associate to that of field agent.

Project RISE (Regional In-Service Education)
Halls Hill Road
Clochester, Connecticut 06415

INTRODUCTION:

Project RISE (Regional In-Service Education) is an inservice center serving teachers, administrators, support staff, and parents in the schools of East Central Connecticut. RISE currently serves approximately 500 teachers in 13 schools within 9 rural and small-town districts (Andover, Bozrah, Clochester, Franklin, Hebron, Lebanon, Marlboro, RHAM, and Salem). RISE is funded through local board of education assessments and federal and private foundation grants. For three years we have operated an advisory system, employing former teachers and area teachers on leaves of absence who became paid members of the RISE staff. Because of our funding fluctuations, as few as three half-time people and as many as three part-time and two full-time staff have been classroom advisors in a given year visiting each school approximately one-half day per week or on a request basis.

THE ROLE:

Advisors are key people in fostering a continual on-the-spot kind of needs assessment as well as serving as needs-fulfillers informally and non-evaluatively. They help ensure that large group workshops grow from real needs, and that the workshops are followed by personalized, in-classroom assistance when needed. Working with principals, the consultants/advisors also foster buddy-system approaches, set up work groups, curriculum study groups, and other in-school growth activities. They conduct many workshops in their areas of expertise and encourage teachers in each school to do likewise. Because they serve more than one school and meet weekly with advisors serving all other schools, our advisors are able to arrange for inter-town classroom visitations and idea exchanges based on one teacher's need and another's strength.

WHATS WORKING:

The inter-town classroom visitations and idea exchanges have been most successful and are extremely important in our towns which are predominately single school systems and therefore tend to be somewhat ingrown and isolated. Further, single school systems generally have but one administrator who, snowed under by paper blizzards from increasing state and federal regulations, has little time to spend in classrooms as the instructional leader. In the absence of a curriculum specialist, supervisors, and other "middle men" only larger systems can afford, the rural advisor often stands as the teacher's sole reminder that someone still cares about classroom instruction and is willing and able to help. Our advisors are great confidence and ego builders.

We are hard pressed to imagine our centers working effectively without the advisors linking our population of teachers which are sparsly distributed over a wide area. Getting services to people is the key to our success, and there appear to be few alternatives open to us. In fact, the cost of a mobile unit is even higher than an advisory system. Our advisors

give us the greatest opportunity to affect long-lasting improvement in classroom teaching and are well worth their price.

WHAT NEEDS WORK:

Our advisory system is expensive. We have seen teacher centers locate "scrounged" space, use "scrounged" materials, and do unbelievable things on a shoe-string budget, but we have never seen a center with "scrounged" advisors. Good people cost money, which many school systems seem unwilling to provide.

Without federal and foundation dollars we would be unable to support our advisory service as it is currently defined. Title IV C funds made our advisory possible; federal teacher centers program and private foundation funds saved it from an extinction; and we aren't certain how to keep it alive in the future.

School Resource Network
535 East Main Street
Ventura, California 93009

INTRODUCTION:

The School Resource Network (SRN) has organized a Liaison network made up of one representative from each of the 306 public and non-public K-12 schools in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. Each liaison is selected by the teachers at the local school. The SRN maintains close contact with the liaisons by holding formal liaison meetings and "need alike" meetings; by sending written memorandums on a regular basis; and by communicating through the SRN hotline. The formal liaison meetings are held twice each year. All costs of the meetings, including the travel costs of the liaisons, are assumed by the SRN; the liaisons are volunteers and receive no stipends or fees for their contribution to the Network.

THE ROLE:

The overall role of the liaison is to foster an awareness of the SRN at the school site, to encourage peer use of the services and to provide meaningful input to the SRN on the needs and concerns of the school that the liaison represents. Some of the ways they perform this role are: distributing SRN newsletters and fliers, conducting formal and informal inservice needs assessments within the building, contacting the SRN coordinator or director to arrange for the delivery of inservice activities or for the retrieval of information from the computorized data bank, and by sharing resources and information with other liaisons.

WHAT IS WORKING:

The two yearly liaison meetings which are held on a regional basis are highly successful. The focus of these meetings includes:

1. providing current information about the SRN -- new services, programs, materials, etc.

2. providing an opportunity for liaison input into the planning and evaluation of all SRN services/activities

3. asking the liaisons to share the needs and concerns in their schools and develop strategies on how to address these needs and concerns

4. providing an opportunity for professional growth through participation and self-selected awareness training sessions

5. providing an opportunity for liaisons to share among themselves the different ways in which they carry out their role -- their successes, shortcomings and concerns

The theme of all liaison contacts in meetings, in written communication and on the phone is responsiveness -- the SRN is committed to responding to all needs. Liaisons share the convictions of the staff and Policy Board members that the SRN can and will be what teachers want it to be.

Typical feedback from liaisons about the School Resource Network are liaison meetings include:

> "The stronger features of this meeting were organization, the emphasis on meeting the needs of individuals and your willingness to help whenever help is needed. I've used the SRN since the liaison meeting and will use it more in the future."
>
> "This meeting was interesting. I felt that whatever was being said by participants was actually being heard and that positive ideas could be expressed and followed through on."

They are strong testimony for the success of the SRN liaison network as a support group. They reinforce the necessity for meaningful dialogue among colleagues who want to grow. The greatest success of the SRN, however, has been its capacity for speedy and appropriate delivery of services generated out of the liaison meetings.

WHAT NEEDS WORK:

While the bi-annual liaison meetings were highly successful in not only providing a support group and a network of growth minded educators, they were not sufficient for providing the day-to-day contact with the SRN coordinator or director or fellow liaisons. With only two SRN staff members it was an impossibility to visit all 306 schools regularly. The schools that had the most active liaisons and the most requests for services were those that saw the staff. For the most part, the others had to wait until the bi-annual meeting for any direct contact or had to resort to written or telephone communication. Without the stimulation of regular contact from fellow liaisons or from the SRN staff it became quite easy to lose the spirit of the Network and put staff development concerns on a back burner.

Southeast Idaho Teacher Center Consortium
1300 Kimberly Road
Twin Falls, Idaho 83301

INTRODUCTION

The Southeast Idaho Teacher Center Consortium serves 5,000 teachers in 69 school systems and over approximately 54,600 square miles of geography. Ours is the type of Center which takes its services to its clientele on-site; it is not a drop-in type facility.

From the beginning, the Consortium Policy Board understood that the most effective way to communicate with the Center's clientele would be face-to-face, human contact. It, therefore, employed three regional Field Agents to be that human contact. Each Field Agent is a seasoned classroom teacher with experience in consulting and management. Each is responsible for her own service territory consisting of approximately 23 school systems.

THE FIELD AGENT ROLE

The role of these Field Agents is a "mixed bag." There are three major areas of their responsibility: (1) telling our story, (2) delivering the service, and (3) building local capacity and linkages.

In telling our story, the Field Agents meet with school district leaders, school liaison teachers and teachers, in general. They conduct formal and informal needs assessments, SITCC awareness activities and distribute the Center's newsletter and fliers.

When a need for a service is identified by the Field Agent, she is also responsible for ensuring that appropritate planning/design information is secured from the client so as to tailor-make the service to meet the client's precise need. After the design is complete, the Field Agent must also arrange all the logistics for the delivery of the service. While most of the SITCC services are brokered to expert teachers and others for delivery, some are also delivered by the Field Agents themselves. Finally, each Field Agent, from time-to-time, acts in the roll of the teacher-advisor, a role that has begun to emerge prominently in recent staff development literature.

The Field Agents are also responsible for developing and training a network of liaison teachers in each school system. Each school has its liaison teacher, and, at the district/system level, one of these school liaison teachers represents the entire district/system at SITCC regional meetings. The major Field Agent task is to train the liaison teachers in: their role with SITCC, open communications, needs assessment, program design and evaluation, and resource identification and access.

WHAT IS WORKING

Each of our field agents continues to have great success in establishing open communication and trust among our clientele and their school district leadership. Their personalized service and caring have made the difference for us. The unique face-to-face formal needs assessment they use in the field has found acclaim not only in their service areas but also across Idaho and the nation. Their efforts at delivery have also been quite successful, with one exception: the design/plan element.

WHAT NEEDS WORK

We haven't been able to adequately train our network of liaison teachers. There are 359 of these teachers, and we have only 3 half-time field agents to do the training. Moreover, local superintendents are wont to release their teachers for such training. We have resorted to a trainer/of/trainers model. We are training one small group of liaison people in each of our service regions. They, in turn, will train their colleagues in their region -- if we can get release time for the training.

Our other short-fall has been in conducting design/planning sessions. We just haven't found a way to insure that involvement. The field agents don't have time to conduct every design session; so, they must rely on our liaison teachers, whc are often ill-prepared to conduct a design/planning session. As a result, we find many of our activities have been designed for the liaison teacher rather than for the teachers he/she represents. Our hope is that our continued effort at liaison training will pay off for us, ultimately.

Southern New Jersey Regional Teacher Center
Robinson Building
Glassboro State College
Glassboro, N. J. 08028

INTRODUCTION

The Southern New Jersey Regional Teacher Center serves about 15,000 teachers in six counties having 138 school districts and 2,102 square miles of land mass. Our service area ranges from the most rural to the most urban and economically growing areas, such as Atlantic City.

Unity, coordination, and communication are enhanced by the organization of our project since we have both a Regional Policy Board and six Local Site Policy Boards. Full-time Site Coordinators manage each of the six county projects; they also function as regional team members with the Director and Associate Director. Each coordinator (field agent) is an experienced classroom teacher who has also had much experience in planning and conducting in-service programs.

THE FIELD AGENT ROLE

The role of each Site Coordinator is demanding and diverse. Additionally, the diversity of each county alters the role somewhat. The counties range from a teacher population of 900 to 5,000. There are, however, areas of responsibility that are common across the region. Each responsibility is implemented by continually building awareness of our services through monthly calendars of events to each teacher, visitations to schools, and awareness presentations.

Responsibilities encompass:

Delivering our services so that our purpose of "change agentry" is fulfilled. To accomplish this, we conduct both informal and formal needs identification processes, identify and prepare teachers to be Teacher Leaders for topics of interest and need, sponsor courses, and conduct programs both at our Teacher Center locations and in schools throughout the region. Evaluation of each program is recorded and reviewed by the Teacher Leaders and Site Coordinators to provide documentation of the effectiveness of our program efforts.

Managing a Teacher Center site so that it is an inviting atmosphere where teachers can efficiently retrieve resource materials, construct classroom materials, interact with each other, and borrow from the wide offerings available. Responsibilities in maintaining the site also include administering the budget.

Creating a system of support so that teachers believe in the philosophy that they can be responsible for their own in-service. We are developing this by building county identities, supporting key roles for both regional and local site policy board members, enhancing teachers' confidence and desire to increase their expertise in a variety of teaching techniques, and by projecting teachers as the backbone of the program offerings and deliveries.

WHAT IS WORKING

We believe that our decision to promote decentralization of the region in order to build strength and involvement on a more "personal" basis was, in fact, the right decision.

Our successes include:

Cooperative and active planning between our site policy boards and coordinators which has ensured ownership and participants who receive the delivery of our programs and other services in a positive way.

Effective and personalized assistance to teachers has occurred due to the outstanding interpersonal skills of each coordinator. Our coordinators have build trust since they are knowledgeable of the services available across the region and are therefore able to serve as a broker in meeting the diverse requests that come daily.

Commitment to our philosophy that Teacher Centering means caring enough to respond to all teachers. This has been demonstrated by our helping large groups, small groups, and even individual teachers.

Teachers feeling supported and enthusiastic enough to volunteer to be Teacher Leaders and Teacher Specialists so that our services have been greatly expanded and focused on the teacher rather than the coordinator.

WHAT NEEDS WORK

Although many of our Teacher Leaders have demonstrated excellent skills at conducting in-service programs, we plan to further formalize the training which we offer to help them become curriculum change agents and in-service resource agents in their educational "community".

We will continue to strengthen the decentralized goverance role of our project by increasing the number of local site teachers on our regional policy board.

We will hire and provide in-service for more Teacher Specialists in order to implement sustained activity in a greater number of priority areas.

Southern Piedmont Educational
Consortium Teacher Center
619 Wall Street
Albemarle, NC 28001

INTRODUCTION

The Southern Piedmont Educational Consortium Teacher Center serves 3,400 teachers in ten county and city school systems. The consortium covers rural, industrial, and small city schools. It is adjacent to a large urban center.

There are three drop-in centers within sixty miles of each other and connected by a network of good roads.

The intent of the Policy Board is to develop on-going support for teachers through a center but more importantly through contact with a fellow teacher for professional growth and support.

THE FIELD AGENT ROLE

Two field-based roles were developed for providing this personal support:

The Instructional Coordinator works most of the time in schools with teachers -- listening, offering resources and suggestions when appropriate, initiating activities to solve mutually agreed-upon problems, demonstrating lessons, brokering, and working with teachers to develop their teacher leadership roles to other teachers.

The Teacher Counselor is available via a "hot line phone", and for face-to-face counseling. A greater part of her job is to be in schools for spontaneous support after the "school bell rings" and to develop school-based study and support teams that promote adults taking care of adults. They learn adult leadership strategies, self-care skills, time management skills for using these positively through workshops and study groups.

WHAT IS WORKING

Both the Instructional Coordinators' role and Teacher Counselor's role are working successfully. The people in these roles have established professional and personal trust with teachers and administrators as well. Teachers seem to "grab" them when they come to their schools. The face-to-face contact in the school is our strongest place to initiate activity. These school-based activities usually precede teachers' visits to Teacher Centers.

WHAT NEEDS WORK

When these roles don't work, it usually points to mismanagement of one's time and calendar or a lack of skills in the helping/advising role.

The second area that needs work is acquiring more skills to know how to develop leadership in teachers.

TRIAD Teacher Center
Burtsfield Elementary
N. Salisbury
W. Lafayette, IN 47906

INTRODUCTION

TRIAD Teacher Center serves 1600 teachers in six school districts within 700 square miles. We are a consortium of districts serving isolated small town/rural communities. We have three classrooms in an elementary school which serve as a drop-in site and as the facility for extensive workshop programming. In addition, the staff facilitates the immediate needs of individual teachers via service requests and/or links teachers with others who can share their particular skills. There are three professional staff members--the supervisor, the assistant supervisor/media specialist and an administrative assistant--and a secretary.

The Field Agent role was created towards the end of the second year of operation. Evaluation of Center usage showed that a human contact was needed for teachers in the outlying schools to acquaint them with TRIAD and to deliver services that would demonstrate our usefulness to them.

THE FIELD AGENT ROLE

The Field Agent is a member of the team of professional staff (the administrative assistant) who carries out the day-to-day activities at the Center. It is her responsibility to carry the workings of the Center to schools whose distance precludes frequent teacher use of the Center. There are several aspects to this service. The Field Agent presents portable versions of workshops held at TRIAD and conducts others designed to meet the specific needs of individual faculties. Through these presentations the Field Agent meets collective needs. By travelling to the various schools to meet and talk with the teachers informally as well as during scheduled workshops, the Field Agent monitors individual teacher needs. A special effort is underway to reach secondary teachers through the scheduling of department meetings at TRIAD or at the school and through personal calls and contacts. The major emphasis is establishing a linkage system of teachers who will serve as resources for each other and for TRIAD.

WHAT IS WORKING

There has been a sharp increase in the numbers of teachers from distant schools who are visiting the Center on a drop-in basis and enrolling in the on-site workshop offerings. Attendance at off-site workshop offerings is high, particularly when the topic is one mutually decided upon by the teachers in the host school. We have had success in holding department and small school faculty meetings at TRIAD. At these meetings we have used the form "My Dream Sheet" to solicit curriculum ideas that teachers would develop had they the resources and time. The TRIAD staff collectively responds to these statements citing materials/human resources known available or suggesting resources at TRIAD. The responses are returned to the authors. This procedure has generated increased interest among secondary teachers whose needs are highly specialized.

WHAT NEEDS WORK

Our Field Agent role is in the incipient stages. Our attention at this time is directed toward the eventual goal of recruitment of liasion teachers. We are working on establishing a linkage system (Teacher resource to teacher and materials to teacher)--for discretionary use by TRIAD staff in matching need to resource. We are now polishing our model of resource recruitment and developing our staff's personal skills in utilizing the model in our special, highly conservative service area. Special attention is being given to the educator trust level and discretionary use of teacher expertise and personally developed materials.

We are entering the formal programming stages in August/September 1981 of training volunteers in school teams to design and conduct problem solving and leadership sessions for faculty members. The program committee's attentions are being directed now towards what kind of leadership training is needed for our teams and how the Field Agent can encourage its use in the schools. We are currently working on recruitment of building level administrators to be partners in the design.

Washington West Resource Center
Old Post Office
RFD 1, Box 172N
Waitsfield, Vermont 05673

INTRODUCTION

The Washington West Resource Center serves four Supervisory Unions in Central Vermont. This service area includes 32 elementary and secondary schools, 649 educators, and over 7,000 children.

The Resource Center exists as a place in Waitsfield. However, because of the rural isolation created by mountain ranges, hard winters, and sparse population, the Resource Center's staff services, resources, and program activities are also provided to teachers on-site in their schools.

The philosophy of the Resource Center's Policy Board and staff is based on an "inside-out" approach to professional development. Teacher growth happens best when facilitated by programs generated by teachers for teachers. An effective professional development program responds to the ongoing, day-to-day needs of teachers in their classrooms with children.

The Resource Center's activities are born of the relationship between the classroom teacher and the Center's most important services - the staff advisors and teacher advisor interns.

THE FIELD AGENT ROLE

Staff Advisors and Teacher Advisor Interns

The Resource Center's staff advisors work with teachers upon the teachers' request and have no evaluative or supervisory function. Teacher advisor interns are experienced classroom teachers who are released from their classrooms one-half day per week for approximately 27 weeks to serve as advisors to colleagues in their own or other nearby schools.

Both staff advisors and teacher advisor interns provide professional and personal support to teachers. This grass roots inservice education might include: curriculum development and adaptation, classroom organization, specific skills development, materials review and acquisitions, and linkage of service area teachers with other Resource Center programs such as incentive awards or courses and workshops.

An advisor's relationship with a teacher is based on mutual trust and respect which develops as the teacher and advisor work together to explore the teaching and learning process and solve the daily problems of teaching.

WHAT IS WORKING

Advisory services to teachers have increased significantly during each year of the Washington West Resource Center's existence. This form of on-going, direct service to teachers is working because it is personalized inservice education that provides for specific examination of ideas, values, concepts, and questions which stimulate the improvement of the teaching and learning process in classrooms and schools. It is

also working because it fosters the "inside-out" approach which makes teachers responsible agents of their own growth and development.

Teachers are especially excited about the success of the Teacher Advisor Intern Program. This program has afforded experienced teachers an opportunity to share their specific expertise with colleagues and has provided the advisor interns a chance to be professional development leaders in their schools.

The teacher advisor interns receive training in effective ways of working with teachers, principals, and community members in order to facilitate meaningful program changes and professional growth in the schools where they work.

This release time program has provided an excellent opportunity to increase sharing among teachers who because of heavy work loads are often isolated from their colleagues.

WHAT NEEDS WORK

The Resource Center's Policy Board would like to increase the amount of advisory services provided by teacher advisor interns as well as the number of teacher advisor interns participating in this program. Grants from the Teachers Centers Exchange and the National Educational Association have allowed the Center to model the program over the last year and a half.

Increased funding and cooperative planning is necessary to have the Teacher Advisor Intern Program function as a complete and workable on-site inservice support system. With increased funding, teacher advisor interns would be released in each participating school district and would enable the Center to expand this effective staff development practice.

Wood County Area Teacher Center
1 Courthouse Square
Bowling Green, Ohio 43402

INTRODUCTION

The Wood County Area Teacher Center (WCATC) serves all nine school districts within the boundaries of Wood County (approximately 20 miles directly south of Toledo) in Northwest Ohio. The individual number of buildings served is forty-eight, containing 938 teachers and administrators responsible for the education of 20,643 students.

THE FIELD AGENT ROLE

The Teacher Center is not a physical location. It is a concept whose main goal is improved and increased teacher inservice. This inservice takes two forms - one, a mid-career renewal for experienced teachers, the other, general teacher inservice by teachers who have expertise in areas that would benefit other educators.

The Center operates with only one continuing staff position, the Center Director, and one secretarial support staff person. Five-full-time and ten half-time mid-career teachers (teacher trainers) assist in the self-development activities. The mid-career teachers are paid by their respective boards of education. They are replaced in the classroom with interns who are in the fifth year of their training and fully certified. The cost of interns is provided for in the Teacher Center Budget. Added in year two was a mini-award program which allows from two to four week experiences for self-development. A substitute takes the place of the teacher during reassignment. The reminder of the budget is directed toward activities to facilitate additional staff development.

Field agentry in the WCATC is handled be two basic groups of professionals; the teacher trainers and building representatives. All policy board members also act as field agents as do the chairperson of its standing committees.

The teacher trainers, during their term/period of reassignment, are asked to conduct a continuous ongoing needs assessment to determine the areas of inservice teachers in the WCATC's service area indicate they want and when they desire it. The information gathered allows the WCATC to design specific inservice offerings, where they can be conducted by university professor, teacher trainer or a classroom teacher identified as a expert in a given discipline or field by the Inservice Committee. The other reactor to such requests in the Self-Development Committee which decides (with Bowling Green State University) on cooperative offerings of BGSU/WCATC.

WHAT IS WORKING

Each of the formerly mentioned field agents has been very successful. Since trainers have an office in their building, even after reassignment, they are the most effective group. Not only are they able

to assess needs but can, in many cases, respond directly to that need in an immediate way. Policy Board members have also been effective but, because of the limitation of only one or two to each district, are less so than the trainers, former and present.

WHAT NEEDS WORK

Our least effective field agent is the building representative, due mainly to the lack of contact between them and the director. As a center with only one continuing professional staff position, the director is spread too thin to have been very effective with the building representatives. Through the use of specially designed bulletin board posters and the request for a specific section in each building to be set aside for the WCATC, it is hoped that these individuals will become as effective as the teacher trainers and policy board representatives.